

# CALIFORNIA HISTORY PLAN



TELLING THE STORIES  
OF CALIFORNIANS

2009  
PART I

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TELLING THE STORIES  
OF CALIFORNIANS



## PART I



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# Summary

In November 2002, California’s preservation leaders gathered at a Cultural Heritage Resources Summit to assess the status of historic and cultural resource preservation in California. One of the Summit’s conclusions was that California’s historic preservationists, arts and cultural communities should come together as a unified constituency to work toward common goals.

Subsequently, California State Parks Director Ruth Coleman made a commitment to update the California History Plan, first published by the

California’s history—and that the Plan describe how our state’s cultural stewards can work together to fill these gaps.

“The heritage experts generally agreed that California needs better public representations of the Concepts of “Evolving Economies” and “Understanding Cultural Identity.”

department in 1972. She asked that the new Plan identify what is missing from our preserved cultural heritage—the stories we’re not yet telling about

Updating the History Plan presented a challenge. The original Plan treated California’s history as a chronological sequence of dates and events, but people and places do not follow a straight time-line. Events and actions happen simultaneously. Cultures evolve, merge, and sometimes fade. In order to evaluate California’s preserved cultural heritage and assess which ‘stories’ might be missing, a different approach was needed.

Through a series of discussions with cultural heritage experts throughout

the state, California State Parks developed a new California History Framework. Consisting of

“ ...the history and development of agriculture – California’s most dominant industry and a strong cultural influence – was also not well represented. ”

eight Concepts and 37 related Categories, the Framework responds to evolving concerns and interests, and reflects current scholarship in the

field of California history. State Parks then surveyed cultural heritage experts from many public agencies to identify the Categories within the Framework that are currently underrepresented within the state’s publicly-owned cultural properties.

The heritage experts generally agreed that California needs better public representations of the Concepts of “Evolving Economies” and “Understanding Cultural Identity.” They also believed that the history and development of agriculture—California’s most dominant industry and a strong cultural influence—was also not well represented.



*Suburban growth encroaching on California’s agricultural lands*





*Weaverville  
Joss House State  
Historic Park keeps  
California's Chinese  
heritage alive*

*California's  
agricultural bounty  
feeds the country  
and the world*



*Chumash Painted  
Cave State  
Historic Park  
preserves early  
pictographs*



In addition to the gaps in the History Framework identified by the cultural heritage experts, California State Parks recognizes a geographical disparity in the publicly accessible heritage sites related to the Framework Concepts and Categories described in Part II of the History Plan. The large majority of these sites are located in the north state. This imbalance extends into the Central Valley as well, where California State Parks is underrepresented.

These “gaps” cannot be filled by California State Parks alone. It is recognized that other organizations and institutions may be better positioned to address some of these issues. California State Parks, therefore, proposes a common agenda for the acquisition, preservation, and interpretation of our State’s underrepresented cultural properties.

In this History Plan, California State Parks commits to this common agenda through a three-phased program that involves:

- The acquisition and preservation by California State Parks of cultural properties of exceptional significance that fill identified gaps within the History Framework, address the geographical disparities, and are not likely to be acquired and preserved by other agencies, institutions or organizations;
- Participation with other agencies, institutions and organizations in the development of heritage corridors, driving routes that

“ In this History Plan, California State Parks commits to carrying out this common agenda by acquiring and interpreting cultural resource properties to help fill in these gaps. ”

could link State Parks and non-State Park sites and museums to interpret under-represented aspects of California history and culture. They would provide under-served areas of the state with educational and interpretive opportunities. An example would be a corridor that includes historic and contemporary farms, as well as historic sites and museums, to interpret the importance of agriculture in California’s development and economy; and

- Employing the latest technology, as well as more traditional programs and media, to bring concepts embodied in the History Framework to the broadest spectrum of California’s diverse population.

This volume of the California History Plan provides an overview of the Framework, describes its eight organizational Concepts, and identifies the main gaps within California’s publicly-owned heritage sites.

Part II of the Plan explains the Framework in more detail and explains how State Parks employed it as an analytical tool. The Framework is now available for other federal, state, local government and non-profit entities to use on a local or regional scale. It can help them in their efforts to preserve and protect cultural resources and ensure our state’s history is available to its citizens.

Several challenges now lie before us. First, the California History

Plan is not just a document by and for California State Parks. Cultural heritage organizations throughout the state are urged to examine this agenda and evaluate its relevancy to their vision and mission.

Second, cultural heritage organizations at all levels—state, local, federal, and private entities that promote historic preservation, parks, art, and culture— must become a unified constituency. Only by cooperating and advancing a common agenda can California’s cultural heritage organizations muster the political and economic resources needed to address the deficiencies identified in this History Plan. Cultural heritage entities must become true partners in preserving California’s rich history.



# Stewards of California's Cultural Heritage

Cultural stewardship refers to the range of practices that help to preserve, protect, analyze, interpret, and present the many aspects of cultural heritage.

If California's population continues to grow at its current rate, we will have 50 million residents by 2040. This growth places tremendous pressures on the state's remaining prehistoric and historic sites. Public ownership, easements, and historic preservation ordinances protect many of these properties. However, our collection of publicly-owned resources lacks sites that embody many key concepts or themes important to telling the complete story of California's history. If California is to safeguard its cultural heritage in a way that presents a truer picture of itself, California's cultural stewards must work together to acquire, protect, and interpret many more of our prehistoric, ethnographic, and historic places.

California's cultural stewards are as diverse as the state itself. They range from government agencies to

non-profit organizations to individuals, and include large regional institutions, small local historical societies, service organizations, and libraries. They have an equally broad assortment of funding strategies. Although there are too many cultural stewards to describe in this brief document, all are indispensable for preserving and interpreting California's cultural heritage. Their presence is the backdrop for this section, which outlines California State Parks' efforts to preserve California's cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage includes:

- Historic structures, archaeological sites, and historic landscapes;
- Collections of documentary materials, such as historic books, books about history, archives, pictures, photographs, and manuscripts;





*California State Parks collections include this Patwin mush boiler basket made by Bell Luluk from the Cortina Rancheria in Colusa County, c. 1890*

- Collections of historical, ethnographic, and archaeological objects inside and outside of formal museums, research facilities, and interpretive centers;
- The exhibition, interpretation, and preservation of historical objects, structures, and sites in a variety of settings ranging from museums to historic houses to interpretive programs in parks; and
- Folkways or lifestyles, including tangible and intangible manifestations of culture and tradition, such as music, art, poetry, skills, food, and practices.

# State Parks' Stewardship of Cultural Resources

California State Parks is the only state agency formally charged with preserving and protecting the full range of the state's most valued cultural resources as part of its mission. In 2001, State Parks adopted a strategic initiative "to increase the focus on and awareness of our priceless heritage."<sup>1</sup> In its role as a steward of cultural resources, State Parks has committed to enhancing efforts to preserve, restore, rehabilitate, and where appropriate, reconstruct significant historic structures, sites, features, and cultural landscapes in conformance with accepted practices and recognized historic preservation standards and guidelines.<sup>2</sup> In addition to managing its own buildings and collections, California State Parks supports other cultural stewardship organizations with a variety of grant programs, technical assistance, and partnerships.

California State Parks' cultural resources include an estimated 10,000 archaeological sites, approximately one million museum artifacts and three million archival documents located in various parks and museum centers, about two million archaeological artifacts and specimens, over one million historic documents, and more than 300,000 historic photographs. California State Parks also has responsibility for the care of approximately 3,000 historic buildings and structures and many historic landscapes.

These assets comprise one of the largest collections of historic, archaeological, and cultural resources in the country.

Despite these extensive collections, California State Parks acknowledges that its cultural resource holdings do not reflect the full range of themes and eras of California's history. It has committed to remedying those deficiencies through efforts to protect additional significant prehistoric, ethnographic, and historic properties and cultural landscapes.

California State Parks reviews its overall performance periodically, and produces a Performance Management Report when appropriate to relay the findings of the reviews. A recent report noted that it has improved monitoring, cataloging, assessment, and access for some of its cultural resources. However, much work remains to protect invaluable California Indian

Preservation in 1999 when it listed the Angel Island Immigration Station as one of its “11 Most Endangered Sites in the Nation.” Some things have improved since 1999, as the Immigration Station is being restored and a preservation plan is now in place. Years of budget cuts, however, have taken their toll on the cultural programs in California State Parks.



*Indian Grinding Rock State Historic Park contains 1,185 bedrock mortars*

sites, historic structures, archaeological sites, and historic artifacts located in park units.

Heritage resources throughout the California State Park System suffer from varying degrees of chronic neglect and lack of maintenance. This sad state of affairs was noted by the National Trust for Historic

In 2009, many park districts still have no cultural specialists on staff. In some cases, one specialist is responsible for an entire district, covering historic preservation and archaeology issues for areas larger than the state of Rhode Island. The National Trust again recognized the needs California State Parks when it named the entire



*House museums,  
such as the  
Custom House  
in Monterey  
State Historic  
Park, offer a  
glimpse of  
the past*



*Damaged by  
earthquakes, the  
John Marsh Home  
lacks adequate  
funds for repairs*

*Moving  
a freight  
wagon for  
conservation  
at Bodie State  
Historic Park*







*La Cuesta Encantada (The Enchanted Hill)<sup>®</sup> at Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument*

system—all 279 units—to its 2008 “11 Most Endangered Sites” list, citing decades of deferred maintenance and inadequate funding.

Ideally, California State Parks would have the resources necessary to carry out its cultural responsibilities at the level called for in law, regulation, internal policy guidance, professional standards, and the expectations of the public. But lack of staffing or funding cannot become an excuse for not attempting to meet the standards for managing the irreplaceable heritage resources entrusted to our care.

The 2006/2007 fiscal year state budget included a one-time increase of \$90 million to pay for deferred maintenance projects throughout the California State Park System. These funds are paying for a variety of much needed improvements and repairs to facilities. Although cultural resources have benefitted from this infusion of money, the Department must develop a dependable funding source for ongoing cultural stewardship. Some of the important steps that also must be taken to improve stewardship of cultural resources include:

- Developing “cultural teams” in each park district, composed of at least one archaeologist, historian, interpretive specialist, and museum curator, who would develop and implement a program of cultural stewardship. Their specialized knowledge of California history, architectural styles, Indian cultures, archaeology, museum practices, and appropriate conservation methods should be integrated into park operations and maintenance practices. Cultural specialist skills also are essential for interacting with Indian communities and other interest groups;
- Bringing more interpreters into park units and districts to research and develop exhibits and programs that inform the public about the significance of historical features and artifacts, and make the state’s history relevant to modern Californians;
- Improving visitor centers and museums, and updating exhibits to reflect current scholarship and understanding of cultural resources. Where visitor centers are lacking or inadequate, California State Parks misses important educational opportunities;



*The reconstructed barn is now the visitor center at Leland Stanford Mansion State Historic Park*



*Columbia State Historic Park's annual event, "Columbia Diggins," portrays life during the Gold Rush*

*Reenacting early California dancing at Monterey State Historic Park's Custom House*



- Instituting alternative methods of delivering information about California's history and heritage through technologies such as interactive Web sites, video classrooms, personal digital assistants, and other electronic devices;
- Improving environmental conditions and security in facilities used by California State Parks to store and exhibit its collections.

## THE ROLE OF THE OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) is housed administratively within California State Parks, with whom it shares responsibility for preserving California's heritage.

OHP's mission is to promote preservation and reuse of historic resources, whether privately or publicly owned, and to assess the impacts of federal projects on historic resources.



OHP receives most of its funding from the federal government. As a condition of receiving federal support, California must prepare a Statewide Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan (Preservation Plan), and must update the plan every five years. The 2006-2010 Update of the plan occurred in 2005 and was approved by the National Park Service. The Preservation Plan identifies threats to historic properties, and identifies the

tools that might be useful in averting those threats. It specifically mentions the findings of the California History Plan as identifying thematic aspects of our past that are deserving of special attention or priority in the activities of the OHP. In this way, the California History Plan can influence the identification and preservation of historic resources outside the boundaries of the California State Park System.



*State Historical Resources Commission and Office of Historic Preservation staff at the recently restored Santa Fe Depot in Fresno, 2005*



# The California History Framework

**H**istory has traditionally been viewed as a sequence of dates and events. However, people and places do not follow a linear chronology. Events and actions happen simultaneously, while cultures ebb and flow. At the heart of the History Plan is the California History Framework, an alternative to the chronological approach typically used to understand California's past. The Framework responds to evolving concerns and interests, and reflects current scholarship on California history.

## A FRESH LOOK AT CALIFORNIA HISTORY

The California History Framework applies eight broad, interrelated concepts to organize and place the people, sites, and events of California in context. It takes a cross-cultural, non-chronological approach to the past. As a result, the Framework creates a comprehensive view of history that illuminates important patterns not necessarily evident in chronological presentations of history. Each concept represents a significant

aspect of history. Each of the eight concepts is further expanded by several supporting categories that help to capture the full range of human experience in California. The Framework is patterned on similar work by the National Park Service and Parks Canada.

The History Framework covers, but does not rely on, specific time periods. One or all of the concepts may relate to a single historic site, event, or person in a manner that emphasizes significance and meaning.



# Framework Concept

## UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL IDENTITY



*In 1916, Japanese picture brides arrive at the Immigration Station, now Angel Island State Park*



California’s rich cultural tapestry is a reflection of its dynamic population. Native peoples have inhabited California’s varied terrains and climates for over 13,000 years. Over the last three centuries, movements of people—many from around the world—have brought with them an array of cultural expressions. These Californians evolved through adaptation or conflicts with others. Today, California represents a growing mosaic of culture. The state’s distinctive cultural identity is recognized for its imagination and power to effect change.

CATEGORIES WITHIN THE CONCEPT

- Earliest Inhabitants
- Immigrants, Emigrants and Migrants
- Changing Populations
- Californians and the World

# Framework Concept

## INTERACTING WITH THE ENVIRONMENT



*Hydraulic gold mining dramatically altered California's ecology and landscape*

## INTERACTING WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

Californians of diverse cultural traditions have had varying relationships with the environment. For over 13,000 years, nearly every part of California—from offshore reefs to the crest of the Sierra Nevada, from the coastal redwood forests to the Mojave Desert—has been altered by human societies, often with unintended consequences. Nature’s own dramatic events have also affected the people of California. The conservation and ecology movements developed out of a growing understanding and respect for the power and delicacy of natural systems and their finite resources.

### CATEGORIES WITHIN THE CONCEPT

- Settlement Patterns
- Managing Nature
- Natural Events
- Conservation and Stewardship

# Framework Concept

## LIVING IN COMMUNITIES



*A meeting of the Lyonsville Ladies Club in 1886*

Californians have developed customs and relationships to sustain and enrich communities, neighborhoods, and families. Shared areas of interest and concern have brought structure and support to populations, often assisting those in need. Understanding family structures, community organizations, and social movements, as well as religious and educational institutions, can shed light on the nature of community life in California.

## LIVING IN COMMUNITIES

### CATEGORIES WITHIN THE CONCEPT

- Family
- Religion
- Education
- Social and Community Organizations
- Medicine and Health Care

# Framework Concept

## EVOLVING ECONOMIES



*The transcontinental railroad and the burgeoning citrus industry transformed California's economy*

The economic endeavors of Californians are as diverse as the land. People have used a wide array of activities to sustain themselves; from early subsistence economies to small farm and industrial agricultural operations; from extractive pursuits such as mining, forestry, and fishing, to manufacturing and the global exchange of goods, services, and information.

## EVOLVING ECONOMIES

### CATEGORIES WITHIN THE CONCEPT

- Subsistence
- Extraction
- Agriculture
- Manufacturing and Production
- Trade and Commerce

# Framework Concept

## GOVERNING



*18th Session of California's Legislature meets for the first time in the new State Capitol, 1869*



California's first inhabitants adopted a variety of practices to ensure their cultural survival, common support, and protection. Europeans brought new concepts for security and control to California, instituting more formal and centralized government structures to provide for public safety, defense, and economic stability. Government institutions derived from Spanish and Mexican laws changed under the American system of governance. Concepts of social order, the role of government, and the public good continue to evolve in response to California's developing needs.

# GOVERNING

## CATEGORIES WITHIN THE CONCEPT

- Sovereignty and Defense
- Law and Civic Order
- Government Services
- Political Processes

# Framework Concept

## SUPPORTING SOCIETY



*Bond funds built California's extensive water infrastructure*

From casual connections to elaborate systems and facilities, Californians have created ways to link people with the vital resources that support community life. As populations have grown, so has our infrastructure evolved and become more complex. Leaders and decision makers of the past have been challenged to plan, build, and maintain systems to support California's growing needs.

CATEGORIES WITHIN THE CONCEPT

- Transportation
- Communication
- Water
- Energy
- Public Spaces

SUPPORTING  
SOCIETY

# Framework Concept

## APPLYING INVENTION AND INNOVATION



*Wind power generation*

Invention and innovation have changed California. California's innovators and entrepreneurs have harnessed ideas and energy to revolutionize life and have transformed economies. Twentieth and twenty-first century aerospace, bioengineering, and the computer science industries continue to contribute to California's position on the cutting edge of invention and innovation.

## CATEGORIES WITHIN THE CONCEPT

- Exploration\_\_\_\_\_
- Science\_\_\_\_\_
- Technology\_\_\_\_\_
- Engineering\_\_\_\_\_

APPLYING  
INVENTION  
AND INNOVATION

# Framework Concept

## EXPRESSING INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL IDEAS



*Ansel Adams captured the wild beauty of California*

California's cultural life has been articulated through a host of social practices. It has used traditional cultural practices and employed new approaches to subjects, problems, or ideas. From the distant past to the present, California's people and sites, as well as the physical products of creative processes, have set standards that many seek to emulate.

## CATEGORIES WITHIN THE CONCEPT

- Visual and Performing Arts
- Oral and Written Expression
- Architecture and Cultural Landscapes
- Recreation and Leisure
- Philosophy and Spirituality
- History and Preservation

EXPRESSING  
INTELLECTUAL AND  
CULTURAL IDEAS

# Identifying the Gaps

## THE STORIES WE'RE NOT YET TELLING

In preparing the California History Plan, California State Parks surveyed cultural heritage experts throughout the state. They were asked to identify which of the concepts and categories in the California History Framework they believed were missing or underrepresented from California's publicly-owned heritage sites.

In particular, the survey asked participants to identify separately the gaps in terms of acquisition (significant or unique historical properties, buildings, objects, and sites that should be purchased), and interpretation (communication that tells a story through a variety of media).

This section presents a summary of the survey results. For more details regarding the survey, please see Part II of the California History Plan.

Overall, the survey results indicated that acquisition of new properties be centered on four specific concepts,

and that California's cultural stewards need to do a better job of interpreting existing heritage sites to fill the gaps in the Framework.

Acquisitions that are not additions to existing facilities and require the establishment of new park units or museums can be particularly costly. Such properties, therefore, must be examined and evaluated carefully to ensure that the most significant sites that address clearly identified gaps in the California History Framework are considered for acquisition.

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**Acquisition:** purchasing historical properties, buildings, objects, easements, and sites.

**Interpretation:** a special form of communication, using a variety of media, that helps people understand, appreciate, and connect with cultural and natural resources.



# STORIES TO BE TOLD THROUGH ACQUISITION

Most of the experts surveyed stated that the following concepts were missing or underrepresented within California’s publicly-owned heritage sites:

■ Understanding Cultural Identity

■ Evolving Economies

■ Applying Invention and Innovation

■ Expressing Intellectual and Cultural Ideas

The following pages expand on these concepts and suggest the type of cultural properties to be acquired.



## Understanding Cultural Identity

Today's Californians come from all parts of the world, just as they have for thousands of years. Each new resident brings a cultural identity, an identity that both blends with their neighbors and possesses unique elements. The changing of California's population is evident in changes in architecture, food, clothing, occupations, and life ways. As California draws more residents and visitors from diverse backgrounds, its cultural heritage organizations need to broaden the stories they tell through historic sites and parks.

Often locations representing California's ethnic and cultural diversity do not fall within the parameters of traditional historic sites or parks. Heritage agencies, nevertheless, should identify and acquire important locations that reflect the diversity of California. These may include sites in urban areas or rural environments, both equally remote geographically and intellectually from existing parks and historic venues. Failure to preserve such locations may result in the state's history and preservation programs becoming increasingly irrelevant to California's growing multi-cultural population.



*Mission San Antonio de Padua,  
founded in 1771*

*The Monroe family, Coloma,  
portrait c. 1890s*



## ■ Evolving Economies

California has one of the world's largest economies. This economy has evolved over thousands of years from subsistence to organized exploitation of natural resources to the business of agriculture, and from local manufacturing and production to global trade and commerce. The daily lives of farmers, farm workers, factory owners and factory workers are part of the cultural heritage of the state. Their stories need to be told in places such as farms, factories and industrial sites. Such locations, however, often are difficult to acquire and manage as parks or museums. Therefore, only sites of exceptional relevance to this category should be considered for acquisition and preservation.



*Holt tractors, c. 1910,  
built in California for  
California's farmers*

*Driving cattle  
in the Sacramento  
Valley, c. 1925*



*Women workers process  
peaches, c. 1930*

## ■ Applying Invention and Innovation

Californians have changed their lives and landscape through the application of science, technology and engineering. California's inventions and innovations have increased production, enhanced the quality and comfort of life, increased the speed of travel, and improved communications. Often, however, locations identified with science and technology are not thought of as being old, or particularly aesthetically pleasing. For these reasons, they are in greater danger of being lost than more traditional historic sites. Survey respondents also generally agreed that properties associated with this concept may not be readily acquired by public agencies, but suggested that public agencies could form partnerships with private organizations and industry to preserve sites with significant ties to inventions and innovations throughout California.

*Suspension bridge,  
Nevada City, mid  
1860s*



*Anaheim's first telephone  
switchboard, 1907*



*United Airlines' inaugural  
flight into Visalia, 1946*



*Los Angeles freeway, 1954*





## ■ Expressing Intellectual and Cultural Ideas

California has long been in the forefront of intellectual pursuits, artistic movements and athletic achievements. The name 'California' brings to mind movies, music, architecture, leisure pursuits, philosophy, and continual change in lifestyles. Locations where many of these movements and activities originated or took place are in public ownership, but heritage agencies still need to identify and acquire especially significant sites to represent fully the enormous variety of Californians' intellectual and cultural expressions.



*Making movies in  
Sacramento, c. 1914*

*The "Anaheim Daily  
Herald" delivers the  
news, c. 1922*



*The Grateful Dead  
perform in concert  
in the 1970s*

# STORIES TO BE TOLD THROUGH INTERPRETATION

A majority of the survey respondents stated that these four concepts were insufficiently interpreted within California’s publicly-owned heritage sites.

■ Understanding Cultural Identity

■ Interacting with the Environment

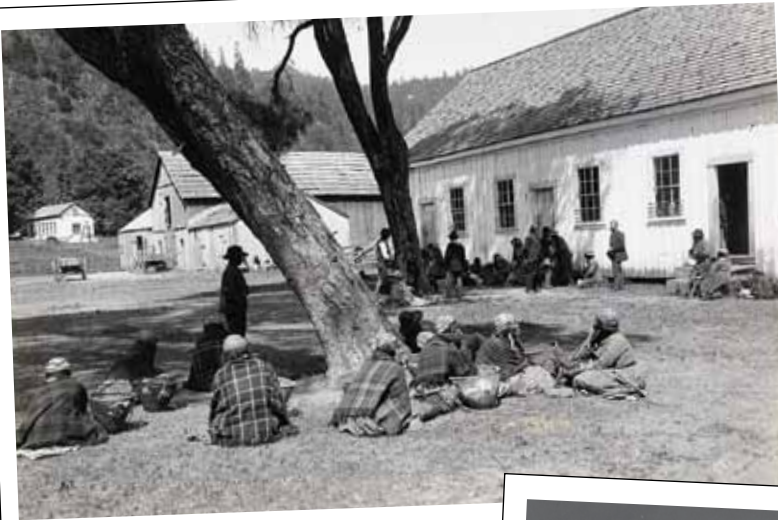
■ Supporting Society

■ Expressing Intellectual and Cultural Ideas

The following pages expand on these four concepts and suggest ways to improve their interpretation.

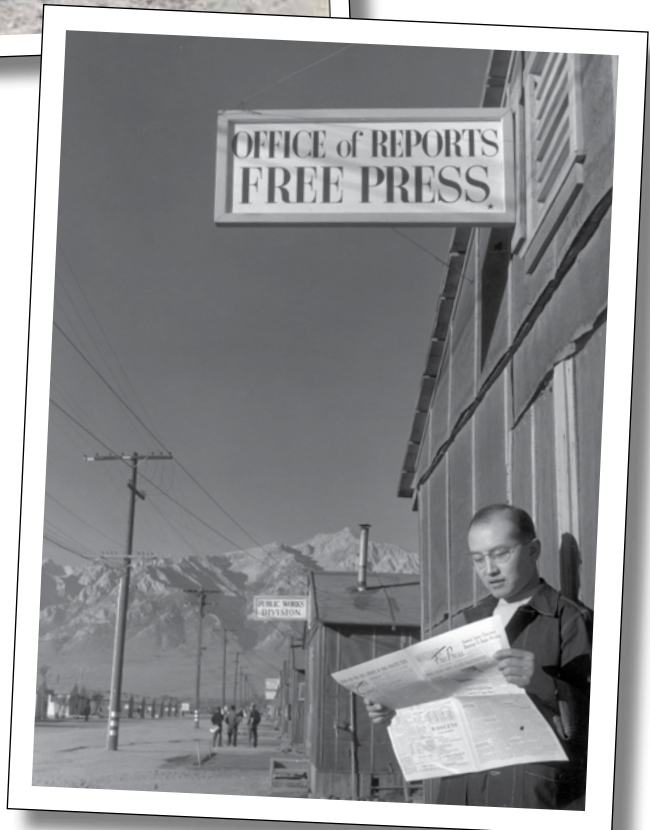
## Understanding Cultural Identity

Archaeological and historical records demonstrate that California has been a destination for population migrations for thousands of years. The state's current character reflects its people, whose array of cultural expressions continues to evolve through adaptation or conflict. Interpretation at many of the heritage properties in public ownership needs to make the public aware of the cultural shifts in California, particularly before the Mission era and over the last 100 years.



*Fort Gaston Hoopa  
Valley Reservation,  
c. 1900*

*Manzanar Internment  
Camp in 1943*



## ■ Interacting with the Environment

Humans have altered nearly every aspect of California, and have responded repeatedly to natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, floods, fire and drought. While during most of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Californians viewed land and water resources in terms of economic development, they have since become increasingly concerned with preserving and restoring the state's remaining natural and scenic resources. Often this story is lost amid the grandeur of our national and state parks. Cultural heritage entities could do a better job of interpreting how Californians have modified the land and later embraced a conservation ethic and, more recently, a preservation ethic.



*Camping in Calaveras Grove in 1893, now Calaveras Big Trees State Park*

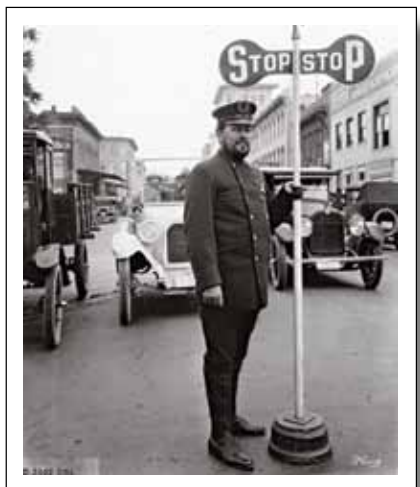
## ■ Supporting Society

The infrastructure of society includes transportation and communication networks, energy sources, water projects, and public spaces. California's transportation system has evolved from trails to roads, highways, railroads and airports. Likewise, its energy resources now range from traditional fossil fuels to complex systems using solar, wind, and nuclear power. Californians often view the history of these immense statewide systems as dry or too complex. Heritage organizations need to develop innovative approaches to interpretation that tell the infrastructure story in terms of the people who envisioned and built it.

*Constructing the original Yolo Causeway between Davis and Sacramento, c. 1915*



*A Sacramento police officer directs traffic in 1922*





## Expressing Intellectual and Cultural Ideas

Societies define themselves, in part, by their built environments. Architectural styles and landscapes convey the values and aesthetics of their era. Interpretation of these facets of California's heritage should emphasize the vernacular as well as the monumental, and include the twentieth century movement to preserve architecture and cultural landscapes. Similarly, developments in art, music and literature help trace cultural change. Their interpretation is often found in museums, conservatories, and lecture halls. Heritage organizations should seek to broaden this focus and relate aspects of California art, music and literature to their interpretation of historic sites and events.



*A redwood plank sweat house represents the architectural tradition of the Pechan people, c. 1901*

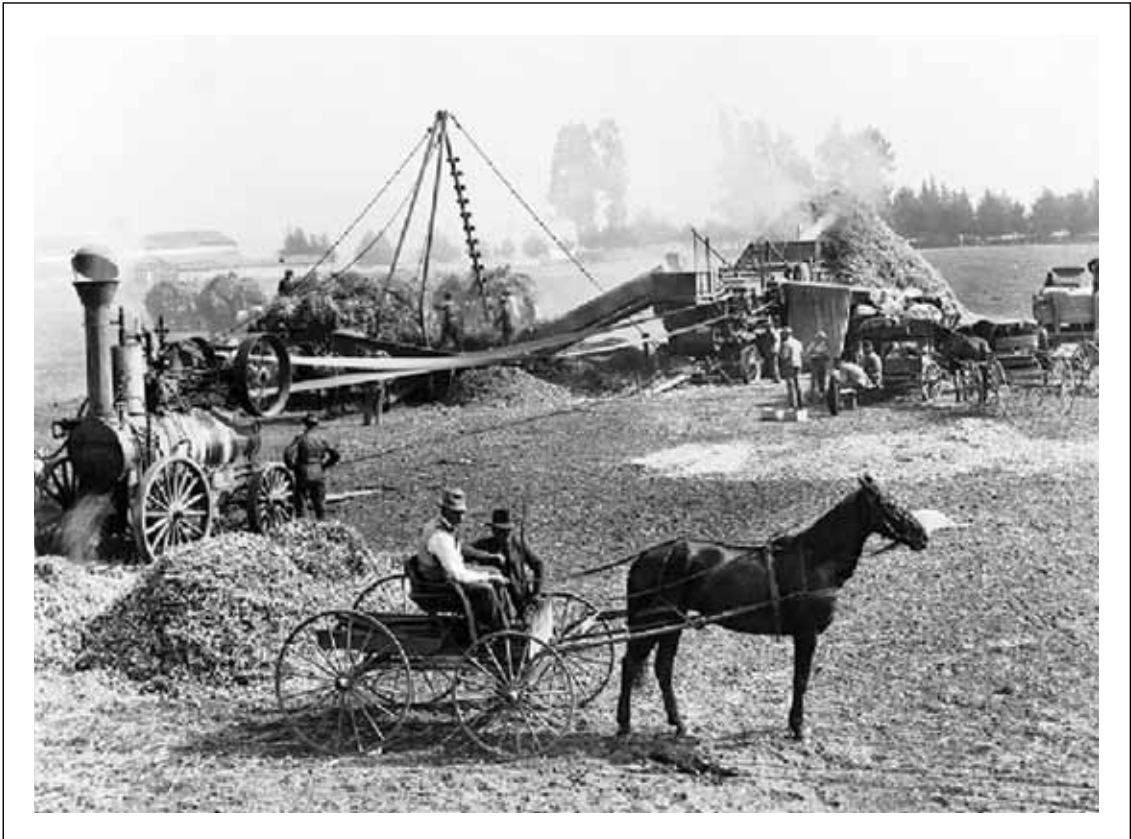
*The Civilian Conservation Corps restoring La Purísima Mission in the 1930s*



*Frank Lloyd Wright designed this Maiden Lane store in San Francisco in 1948*



# STORIES TO BE TOLD THROUGH BOTH ACQUISITION AND INTERPRETATION



*Bean threshing at Centinela Ranch in Inglewood, c. 1903*

Survey respondents agreed that the category of *Agriculture* is greatly underrepresented, both in terms of preserved heritage resources in public ownership, and in terms of interpretation available to the public. The *Changing Populations* category also received wide support for both acquisition of relevant locations and greater interpretive focus on this aspect of California history. The well-known

connection between developments in agriculture and the spread of different populations throughout the state suggests that it would be possible to emphasize both concepts in future heritage projects.

**The categories of  
*Agriculture* and *Changing  
Populations* are both  
underrepresented.**



*Between 1853 and 1906 a Chinese fishing community thrived at Point Lobos, now Point Lobos State Reserve*



*Dust Bowl refugees flocked to California in the 1930s*

# A Call to Action

## WORKING TOGETHER TO FILL THE GAPS

The participants in the 2002 Cultural Summit agreed there should be a Common Agenda for preserving California's cultural heritage. State Parks has identified such an agenda using the California History Framework:

*Throughout the state, greater efforts are needed to acquire and interpret significant cultural resources. These efforts are critical for preserving significant remnants of California's past to help us understand cultural identity, our interaction with the environment, evolving economies, and California's inventive and innovative nature. There is a particular need to preserve agriculture and to interpret its effects on the state's culture and demographics.*

### CHALLENGES THAT LIE BEFORE US

Three main challenges need to be addressed to ensure the success of the Common Agenda for preserving California's cultural heritage:

- First, heritage entities throughout the state need to be encouraged to examine and adopt methods by which they might incorporate and advance the Common Agenda.
- Second, the cultural heritage organizations at all levels – state, federal, local and private that promote historic preservation, parks, art and culture – must become a unified constituency.
- Third, these cultural heritage entities must collaborate and become true partners in preserving California's heritage.

### CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS' COMMITMENTS

With the adoption of the California History Plan, California State Parks establishes policies and priorities for cultural resource acquisition, development and interpretation consistent with the common agenda:

1. The common agenda will serve as a criterion in determining the allocation of future capital outlay funds.
2. California State Parks will promote responsible stewardship of the resources in its care through: research, adequate maintenance of historic buildings and sites, renovation of exhibits and interpretive facilities, improved storage and exhibit environments for museum collections, training of employees in best practices for the treatment and interpretation of



cultural resources, and development and implementation of disaster preparedness plans in all park facilities containing historic resources.

3. To the extent possible, California State Parks will provide assistance to other agencies and organizations in the maintenance and interpretation of their historic sites and museum collections.
4. California State Parks will continue to develop, maintain and make available to agency and public researchers the Departmental Archives, containing the historical record of the Department, and the Department's Photo Archives. It also will preserve and make available for research the Stewardship Collection of documents obtained from historic buildings in the California State Parks System.
5. Within fiscal limitations, California State Parks will seek to increase the resources available for interpretive programming to address gaps in the History Framework.
6. California State Parks will encourage the development of teams of cultural specialists – archaeologists, historians, museum curators and interpreters – in all park districts, and increase operational spending on stewardship and interpretive programs statewide.

7. Within fiscal limitations, California State Parks will advance the acquisition, preservation and interpretation of locations critical to filling the gaps in the History Framework. Where California State Parks either cannot or chooses not to obtain properties, it will provide technical assistance and support to other heritage agencies, institutions or organizations that may seek to acquire them.

## **SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR STATEWIDE PARTNERS**

California State Parks urges others to join in pursuing this agenda. California has a broad range of heritage organizations in the state – each of them can adopt the History Framework and support the common agenda within their own sphere of influence. These include historical societies, arts associations, city and county historic preservation and planning offices, special districts, park agencies, museums, colleges and universities, and cultural centers.

Land management and conservation entities can use this plan in carrying out their programs. State land conservancies, local land trusts, federal land management agencies, and open space districts should incorporate the Concepts and Categories of the History Framework into their evaluations of potential acquisitions, conservation

easements, impact mitigation projects, greenbelts, and watershed programs. Land management plans that include cultural resource protection and interpretation goals also serve to promote the Common Agenda.

## EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The teaching of history in public schools is governed by the History-Social Science Framework established by the California Department of Education. This framework provides guidance for instruction and furnishes content standards. It is, however, largely chronological and sequential. Heritage organizations at all levels are encouraged to connect with educators and present the concepts and categories contained in the California History Framework as a non-linear alternative approach to teaching the state's history.

Visits to cultural heritage sites should be encouraged at all grade levels for K-12 classes. Historic buildings, museums, and cultural landscapes have the ability to tell stories of California's biological, geographical, and demographic diversity as well as its economic, social, political and intellectual development in ways that are both different and complementary to those of the classroom. A population educated about California's history will be more receptive to supporting preservation of the state's cultural heritage.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Local parks, cities, and historical societies have an important role to play in promoting the common agenda in local activities. In addition to acquisition and interpretation programs, local parks, cities, and historical societies can develop Internet sites to make their collections and information widely available. They can also sponsor or conduct research on local and regional history, prepare oral histories, and expand their collections through donations.

## WHAT NEXT?

This California History Plan will be revised and updated in response to evolving values of cultural heritage. It will be important for statewide partners to share the successes and challenges they have experienced in applying the Plan and its associated History Framework. The California History Plan, as it evolves, will become broader and more representative of the concerns of all Californians.

To be successful statewide, the Common Agenda identified in this History Plan needs to be advanced by a consortium of heritage organizations. A preliminary composition of this cultural cartel would include:

- California State Parks
- California Historical Society
- California Preservation Foundation
- Society of California Pioneers



- California Council for the Promotion of History
- California State Archives
- California State Library
- California Association of Museums
- Society for California Archaeology
- Society of California Archivists
- California Native American Heritage Commission
- Selected local and regional history and preservation organizations.

Because of its statewide presence and involvement in all aspects of cultural heritage work, California State Parks is the logical choice to coordinate the activities of this organization, and it will make staff available for this task. California State Parks will arrange meetings of representatives of the above groups at least twice each year, either in person or by phone or video-conferencing, to discuss matters of mutual concern and to develop strategies for promoting the Common Agenda and History Framework.

## CONCLUSION

California, unlike many other states, has no dedicated, publicly funded, state history agency. California State Parks and other public and private organizations address some of this deficiency, but their ability to do so is often limited by fiscal constraints and competing institutional priorities.

Sadly enough, institutions also compete for collections, sites, supporters, and money. Probably the most significant limiting factor, however, has been a lack of broad vision – an inability or unwillingness among California’s heritage agencies to look very far beyond the walls of their own institutions. Consequently, the presentation of the state’s history remains fragmented, with some areas possessing an abundance of first-class museums, parks and historic sites, while other locations still struggle to obtain or maintain these facilities. Likewise, subjects such as the Missions, Gold Rush, or nineteenth century middle/upper-class domestic life, are either adequately covered, or, in some cases, over-represented, while other key subjects, such as agriculture, labor, and the history of the state’s changing populations, receive scant or scattered attention.

This California History Plan, with its Common Agenda and Framework, offers an opportunity to develop a comprehensive approach to preserving and interpreting California’s historic resources. If only California State Parks adopts the Plan, its success will be limited. If, however, our history agencies, institutions and organizations, both public and private, avoid destructive competition and join in advancing their goals and objectives, the result can be a heritage preservation and interpretation program worthy of the Golden State.

# END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> California Department of Parks and Recreation, *The Seventh Generation: The Strategic Vision of California State Parks*, p.19, Sacramento, California, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> California Department of Parks and Recreation, 2006 *Five-year Infrastructure Plan* p.10, Sacramento, California, 2005.

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